



WELCOME TO THE DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #148!

(We will begin the next ten Death Valley Driver Video Reviews with a memorial to the wrestling career of the late great Shinya Hashimoto.)

[Cover by ANTH]

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF SHINYA HASHIMOTO

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"Slingin' Hash"

by AG

As happens with numbing regularity, I staggered to the computer the sun-drenched AM of Monday 7/11 and found the inevitable message board thread with the words "Hashimoto" and "RIP". There will be lots of folks who will blubber over the big man's corpse; I'm not one of them. Perhaps I knew deep down the man was too outsized to live to 80, that he'd die early, like Jumbo, but not like Jumbo at the same time. If Jumbo was the Japanese Thesz, Shinya was the Japanese Dusty. A big fella you could mark out for. But unlike Dusty, Hashimoto's ring work chilled me on the all too few occasions I saw it.

The only time I got to see Hashimoto live was at the NWA 53rd Anniversary "supercard" down in Tampa Florida a few years back. Like I said in a DVDVR reviewing another Hash match sometime back, Hashimoto was a motherfucker of a worker. But that doesn't begin to describe what it was like to see him chop the melanin out of Steve Corino, over and over again, in a sweatbox shithole of an arena in south Florida.

Hash's chops carried with them the atomic weight of inevitability. From the first couple, it seemed inevitable -- no way the match finishes, in the sense that indy fans expect, with the pussy-assed mirror spots and the polite clapping. Hash brought it -- like Wahoo brought it, like Johnny Valentine brought it, as Lance Storm would say -- 3/4 Legit.

Well, Hash's death is 4/4 legit, but he lived a ***** wrestling life. He worked some of the biggest arenas in the world and some of the scummiest American halls one could imagine. But wherever he was, he was larger than life. I'm the sort of guy who can listen to Biggie Smalls all day, even though the production has been passed by through the sheer progression of the calendar. Not to close with another comparison, but Hash was the Biggie of wrestling. Lots of folks can take his place on the bill. But no one can replace him. That, gentle readers, is the measure of a man in full flush of sovereignty, and so it's just as well Hashimoto died -- according to reports -- suddenly, on impact of the aneurysm. Never did anyone have to see this giant of a man turned into self-parody. He died as a King, and -- as every review will attest -- one of the giants of his profession in what was a golden age. -- AG

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Kazuo Yamazaki v. Shinya Hashimoto 8/22/98- (PHIL SCHNEIDER): I actually didn't really feel like writing much about wrestling this week, I have Dustin Rhodes matches to review and two workrate reports to do, but I think I have actually been a little depressed about Shinya Hashimoto. I don't normally think of myself as someone who would let the death of someone he didn't know personally affect him. I had always had some contempt for overly empathetic people, the kind of people who I saw on the bus in front of British Embassy when Princess Diana died or the majority of people all over the internet crying crocodile tears for Owen Hart. I suppose I relate that kind of thing as very showy and self centered. "Look at me, I am a good person, look how much I suffer." I wasn't friends with Shinya Hashimoto, I am not one of his kids or even Fuyuki's wife, what right do I have to appropriate even a small part of their grief.

Still it bums me out, Hashimoto was pretty damn incredible, I remember getting to see him live and the aura he exuded. In front of 50 people, a heckling Rockin Rebel and no reason to try, he was fucking Shinya Hashimoto. So I hung up his bandana in the hallway and I am going to try to write about one of his matches and I have a heavy heart.

Yamazaki was really one of the great forgotten wrestlers of the 1990's, so much that often find myself forgetting him. Like actually forgetting he exists, I bet if you asked me to list my top 50 UWFI guys I would be deep into random Russians before I remembered him. Still every-time I see him, I think damn this guy rules. This is the 1998 G-1 finals and the big match of his career, he had this run in 1998 and gets to be in the finals with the king of New Japan, and he steps the fuck up.

Really simple match. Yamazaki is a kicker, but has no chance of standing toe to toe with Hashimoto, so he decides to go after the leg. That inequality is established early as Hashimoto wastes him with kicks to chest and big chops, So Yamazaki becomes focused. Really the only moves he hits in this match are attacks on the leg, mainly kicks to the thigh. For the early part of the match Hash just shrugs the attack off, before very slowly being more affected. Meanwhile he is laying in a big time beating on Yamazaki. He hits one of his kicks to Yamazaki's chest and crumples a bit, and Yamazaki's gets his big run. Hashimoto was really amazing at playing the role of unbeatable destroyer, who shows little chinks in the armor. He is a monster, who overpowers people, but knows just when to be a little vulnerable. There is a section in the middle where Yamazaki takes over on the leg and you really buy him toppling Golaith. Then when Hash takes back over it goes back to being helpless, and at no point do you lose any sense of absorption into the match. So much of the current Japanese style has people no selling and making big combacks, and you don't buy it- most of Kobashi's title defense in the last couple of years were worked exactly like this match, guy works over the leg, the Kobashi comes back and wins with big offense. I never really bought either Kobashi's desperate straits or his big comeback, whereas Hashimoto really makes you believe in both. Great, great match and great example of his art.

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Shinya Hashimoto vs Toshiaki Kawada- 2/20/2004- All Japan- (DEAN RASMUSSEN): When I read that Shinya Hashimoto had died, I was sitting at my computer at home and had to leave to go to work. I thought about his passing as I drove the thirty minutes to work- trying to figure out how he actually stood with me in relation to my fandom of professional wrestling. Did I like him more than Misawa? Yeah. Did I like him more than Ric Flair? Yeah. Did I like him more than Kawada? Hmmm. Each had matches in the 90s that were pretty awe-inspiring and peculiarly indicative of what I value in the artform of professional wrestling- but in completely different ways. I'm at work now and Just Too Uber posted this match so I'm guessing my own post-mortem comparisons are permeating the thinking of most international professional wrestling fans. This match was at the nadir of each's powers but it was a dream match and it was good to have the Big Two beating the living fuck out of each other. Hashimoto storms to the ring- bloated, broken but intense; gone to seed and no longer the superstar that he was- but defiant and tempered by a career of soaring peaks and plunging valleys with one remaining constant: absolute mastery of every aspect of the psychology of the art of Professional Wrestling. Kawada comes to the ring with the Triple Crown in his hand- he being the greatest of his generation but left to wilt in All Japan defending the faith as his compatriots moved onto the suddenly more legitimate titles in NOAH. So it is- to remnants of two promotions representing recent but long-gone glory- facing each other in a dream match deferred. Kawada's style is 90's All Japan- deep as Lake Superior and cerebral and psychologically unmatched; Hashimoto's style is 90's New Japan- more fiery and emotional, psychologically sound but in a more immediate, less-layered way. Whereas Kawada showed in his match with Kensuke Sasaki that he is also a master of New Japan's predominant wrestling style, here he faces the style's true grand master. This match is super New Japan style as the basic story is that Kawada thinks he can kick harder than Hash can chop- and Kawada can destroy Hashimoto's

[illegible]

The internet is usually full of assholes, who perpetrate an image to compensate for their real-life feelings of insecurity, and never deliver anything tangible they promise you, instead staying immersed in the social circles of cyberworld. (To be fair, I'm sure plenty of people would say that about me as well, but fuck them. I'm drunk. And southern.) Nonetheless, my man Ed "The Turtle" Agner has sent me the lucha libre off the satellite for as long as I stopped paying that bill, which has been a couple years now I think. It was funny calling, once I paid off the bill, the ol'

satellite company to tell them I didn't want their service anymore. The dude was trying to talk me into children's channels and parent locks because I told him I didn't want my kids watching TV. I finally had to be like, "Look. We just don't want TV in our house anymore, at all. It makes us want to buy things we don't need, satellite television being included in that." He gave up at that point, reluctantly, though what I read as his reluctance might've just been him copying my personal information for a Patriot Act watchdog list.

I haven't even watched some of the tapes Ed's sent me, mostly because they're unlabelled, like most of my tapes, so they end up random piles of this or that which I end up forgetting what the stack is of. But I just got one in the mail yesterday, that magical little package in the P.O. box, which I keep separate from my home mail so that it's like Christmas anytime somethings in that little hole at the post office.

MASCARA ANO 2000 vs. PERRO AGUAYO - Mask vs. Hair from April '93

If AAA could just show old shit, I might not hate AAA. Ano Dos Mil is bleeding through his mask, which is an attention to detail the lucha libre brings that no other form of wrestling seems to care about. A masked man bleeds just like any other man. It's also nice to see Perro Aguayo as slightly younger, and not yet having a forehead that looks like someone's knuckles coming through his skull like an old school metal EP cover, hand-drawn on some wide-ruled notebook paper. Kids today fuck around on computers, and I'd say that intelligent delinquents doodling on notebook paper for 45 minutes a day in pre-algebra class created far better art than intelligent delinquents dicking around with photoshop and flash for 45 minutes a day in pre-molecular bullshitology class. Of course, I'm prejudiced because I drew mad skeletons playing double bass drum kits with short-haired heads on pikes doubling as cymbal stands when I was 13. Perro is cheated upon, and resorts to the rare face low blow in retaliation, and wins the match. It is not right, but it is justice. In Mexico, this makes sense; in America, people would be starting email petitions to get the guy who wrote the finish to be fired from his salaried position.

KONNAN vs. CIEN CARAS - also from April '93

Jake "The Snake" Roberts is ringside as Konnan's unaccepting second, in a denim Hard Rock Cafe jacket. I cannot even begin, even with my degenerate mind, the types of things that must've happened with Jake Roberts in Mexico, getting a steady paycheck to just be himself. Konnan loses the match, and his career, by fighting ringside too long with his own second. The irony. Judging by Konnan's braided hair and super-airbrushed trunks in this match, had Konnan '93 and RVD '98 hooked up in fourth-dimensional travel, they would've lifted a lot of weights together, hung out all the time, got high, and felt uncomfortable because both of them would have secretly masturbated to Penthouse letters of two men swimming naked together in a pool one of them was house-sitting at, in a best-friendly manner, ending up in mutual masturbation, with suggestions of more to be happening in the future, name and address withheld.

NICHO EL MILLONARIO w/ Mini Psicosis vs. PSICOSIS w/ Histeria

I guess they can't all be classics from the past, and this match is funny to me because you have a man making money to wrestle the character he made infamous ten years earlier. Of course, Nicho has been around the World four times over, and gotten bigger paychecks for matches he

doesn't remember in cities he's still not sure he ever went to than AAA Psicosis cashed regularly, hiding behind a mask, pretending to be something he ain't. It'd be great if they had a hair vs. mask match, and being there shouldn't be any loyalty from Antonio Pena to the man behind the AAA Psicosis mask, he had Psicosis lose to Nicho, and he unmasked as Jake Roberts. The ladder they're using has one half looking like an extension ladder and the other looking like a stepladder, and ringside is a piece of plywood covered in glittery black fabric, and the lines of age are starting to show on Nicho's face, and I bet that ECW One Night Stand show meant a lot more to him than he'd ever let on. Getting paid bootloads of money to work matches that are contractually obligated not to risk paralysis can easily be taken for granted when you are young and indestructible, but as you get older, it's a lot more appealing to have a steady job you can mail it in on. Nicho runs up the raggedy ladder to splash outside the ring onto Psicosis, who lays on a plywood contraption spray-painted "3". It doesn't break. So Nicho kicks the ladder away, goes back to the top and splashes again, coming down feet first on the plywood contraption so as to guarantee it breaks. Then a thousand wrestlers come out and screwify whatever might be salvaged from this match.

OLIMPICO, AVERNO, & MEPHISTO vs. FELINO, VOLADOR JR., & MISTICO

Schneider said Mistico was the flavor of the month for people who don't know lucha, and I've never seen him yet, so watch me end up loving him because he's stupid, and I'm stupid. He does have a pimp-ass mask. I have always been a mark for Averno & Mephisto though, ever since Satanico slapped them into fire trunks as his newest disciples. After the second fall ends, they show a super-slow-motion replay of a Mistico backflip dive outside the ring, because he is El Hombre Sin Nombre 2005. Sweet. I love self-destruction, though I'm not gonna be naming him the new Ultimo Guerrero or anything. One reason I love lucha on TV is that you don't really have to pay attention for the first two falls, because those are just preliminary build-up to the finale anyways. Now, granted I'm judging from just one match, and that's not even done yet, but the Mistico love is probably parallel to some new porn slut coming along and doing the exact same shit a hundred people in front of her have done, but she is new, exciting-looking, and very enthusiastic about what she's doing. Oh wait, the match ended.

ULTIMO GUERRERO vs. L.A. PAR-K for the CMLL Middleweight title

Ultimo is, as far as I can remember, my favorite non-American wrestler. GODDAMNIT! They do that same sequence of four two-counts every fuckin' indy super-match has, although, post-sequence, I get a close-up of Ultimo's swank gold glitter and black mask as opposed to American Dragon or Alex Shelley's boyish mugs. Parkay takes the first fall with submission crucifix headscissors. (I don't know if that's technically right, it just sounds good and that's what it looked like.) Super-motherfuckin'-gourdbuster by Ultimo leads to a second fall win. The La Parka vs. Sabu match in MLW was a dream match of sorts for me, but really sucked to watch. Me being a cynical fucker, can only imagine this history will repeat itself in five years when someone books an Ultimo Guerrero vs. Necro Butcher match, but hopefully the money mark behind that will be me. That'll mean one of those stupid ten-dollar scratch-off lottery tickets I buy finally paid off for \$2000 a week for the rest of my life.

See, it's all build-up, as the start of this third and deciding fall, the two guys go to opposite turnbuckles to vamp for applause. They show the date, and this is from September of last year? Goddamn, the lucha delay is even crazier now than it was when I still had a satellite tracking my viewing habits for demographic-appropriate commercial-selections. Guerrero drops Parkay on his face from the top, reverse style this time, but only gets a two. But then a sunset powerbomb, and that's that. What sells the lucha, or at least this title match, is Ultimo jumping around, seemingly adrenalinized afterwards, and riding shoulders around the ring like any new champion in an actual sport would. Parkay properly lays center ring, simulating partial paralysis, as Ultimo gets his moment of glory, strutting around the ring triumphantly, wearing some new hardware and carrying a bouquet of pink carnations. That's a quality ending.

EL CANEK vs. RAYO DE JALISCO JR. vs. UNIVERSO DOS MIL vs. DR. WAGNER JR. - four-way mask match

Nothing Wrestlemania has ever come up with comes close to comparing with the pageantry of luchador entrances for big hair/mask matches. Canek and Rayo are both old as dirt, yet everything about Canek emits superiority. He cares to make his strikes look more real, and when he and Rayo are thrown together, he cares to throw his old ass to the mat one more time, whereas Rayo just stumbles back into the ropes. All of the masks get ripped open early on, to tease the later full exposure we'll see of one of these guys. Rayo pins Universo first, because Rayo would never agree to lose his mask, nor agree to suffer that long in a match by working more than the first fall. Fuck him.

If Kurt Angle, or to go even further back, The Patriot, could've dazzled with as many variations of wrestling trunks using only three colors as Dr. Wagner Jr., then Angle might still be an American hero or The Patriot might still have a job wrestling. Second fall so far consists of Canek configuring Wagner to the mat, and Wagner kicks out, to breath visibly heavily until they repeat. It works for me. Once outside the ring though, Universo 2000 gets involved again, and the rudos exercise they're evilness. I guess it has to be those two in the ring, and whoever loses will face Universo for the mask-losing. (I don't claim to be an expert on the lucha libre, though I am an expert on enjoying the lucha libre.) Wagner wins, and the old guy who rang the rudo bell ringside has been replaced by some young ultra-gay dude.

Well into this, Universo goes to the top, but Canek catches him in an armbar and pretzel-twists him into a man who would sacrifice his mask to save his shoulders, but then those other shithead Dynamite Brothers come ringside. They are sent back to the back, but it saves Universo's mask for a few minutes more, and back into the action, Universo hits a low blow while the ref is not looking, then a piledriver while he does see, and slaps on a sharpshooter. Ref DQs Universo, and thus goes the mask, but not after much of that wonderful visually-pleasing finger-waving you see so often in lucha libre. There are no two worse offenses than a low blow or piledriver in the lucha, because in Mexico's machoistic culture, you need your neck to be in full working order to turn your head around to point your eyeballs at sexy women, and you need your penis to be in full working order to poke into those sexy women. Universo Dos Mil is more European than Mexican with his actions, and deserves to show his face to the shame he deserves.

I think I've forgotten to mention like twelve times how much I love lucha ring girls. Thick asses in shiny shorts go a long ways with me.

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INTERNATIONAL WRESTLING SYNDICATE-3/26/2005-Disc 2.
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Our journey through darkest, possibly spunk-scented part of Quebec continues- as we tackle the second disc from the beloved yet mysterious Llakor. Fire up your mooselamp, pop open a 40 dog of Wildcat and double-wrap your festering junk, my fair honey-haired reader- we are taking the Queens highway to Montreal and your world is changed forever!

Shane Matthews/Jagged vs Marc Le Grizzly/Viking vs Tomassino/Chris Wells vs Kenny The Bastard: God, I hate a fucking four-way. Hate hate hate. Fucking hate them. Psychology is always stupid, it's hard to follow, the urge to do retardedly contrived spots are almost always acted upon. GAH! I hate them. Makes me wish ECW never existed. Hate them. Hate. A four-way where the title is on the line and the champions aren't both there is truly cruisin' for a analytical bruise'. It's absolutely everything I hate about a four-way: title changing hands without the champion losing it, one defending tag titles, NUUUUNHNNN. I hate it! anyway, that's where my head is at when we get to the introductions for the match. just take into account how much I hate a 4-way. Okay. Let's go. The introductions are fun- as I had never seen a pro-Quebec tag team so well recieved. They come out to the THIRD version of "Life is Life" that I ever heard (the finest being the version by Laibach- IT'S THE FILLING OF ZE PEEEEPLE! ITS THE FEELING OV ZE LAND!!). The crowd chants political slogans (or something) in French and it's kinda neat in a Welcome To A Foreign Country kind of way. The other folks have less interesting introductions. Nice armdrag early by Kenny the Bastard- as he does the spinning reversal that spins inward to the armdrag that I love- just like Angel Azteca would do. Then it goes all Dragon Gate with the fruity embellishments on basic moves which all leads up to a fucking Rotation Powerbomb! And the Recipient- Kenny the Bastard- is back on his feet within 5 seconds! JESUS! What is he? MENG? Is he not trained to be a professional wrestler? Didn't one of the boys ever sit him down and tell him that wrestling maneuvers are supposed to AFFECT YOU in some way and that you are supposed to act like you are hurt when someone hits you with a move that has actually caused legitimate titles to change hands? But this could be residual 4-Way hatred boiling to the surface. Then they go to dopey contrived spots where Chris Wells (or maybe Tomassino) has to hold his arms in the ropes in an obvious way for a long time. Someone brings a chair! Someone brings the Asai Moonsaults the group standing around on the floor! Someone forgot to bring any structure to this match! They kinda send each other out to the floor as they do a half-assed job of pairing up like in a Cibernetico match- thus the camera lingers on shmoe weakly punching each other in various states of eeeeeeeennnnnui as they wait for someone to stagedive on them. Grizzly looks like fat guy who could be fun but he gets eliminated before I can find out. The Wrecking Crew- Tomassino and Chris Wells- throw really nice forearms and Kenny the Bastard accepts them like a man.

The running knees to the head while Tomisino is stretched out from a backbreaker is pretty fun. Alright! the Wrecking Crew! I can hang my hat on this tagteam in this match! I'm torqued~! Wrecking Crew gets eliminated and my interest wains. Matthews and Jagged have fun Kanyony double teams (though I can see why Ryan wasn't enamored). The Sweet Taste Of Professionalism is fucking beautiful name for a finisher and does actually look fucking great- as Shane holds Kenny up and Flapjacks him onto the flying knees of Jagged. It was beautiful. Comical misdirection and errant chairshots allow Kenny the Bastard to retain his titles. This was a clusterfuck- oh yes, quite completely- but there was a coupla points that I actually liked despite myself. I mean, I don't mind a spotfest- even one as devoid of any psychology, selling or basic wrestling as this one. At least there was a savage postmatch ass-stomping on Kenny the Bastard. Well, in a Northern Junior Heavyweight Creative Spot kind of way. I mean, c'mon, just fucking kick him already.

Chris Hero vs Green Phantom: God, I haven't seen Chris Hero wrestle in a while- prolly not since the 1 hour draws with Punk and American Dragon. Hero gets on THE STICK~! He says "French Canadia" and I fucking WEEP at the beautiful cheap heat. Hero gets assaulted mid-rant and leans into a boot like a fucking champ. Hero brings the NASSTY forearms and does a fucking BEAUTIFUL Ray Stevens bump over the turnbuckle. I forgot that...uh... CHRIS HERO MOTHERFUCKING RULES. Green Phantom tries to keep up as Hero is just fucking intense with the little things- the forearms, clubbing forearms, the punches. Hero works on the shoulder and he bumps all over for Green Phantom's Nova-izations- which aren't very nasty looking at all even with Hero dying to get them over. Hero does lotsa British armwork after a strangely lame first Cravate. Green Phantom has shitty punches. Hero has really good punches. Hero bumps big again with a missed Missile Dropkick and finally Green Phantom gets off a lariat that looks good. They take it to the floor after a lacklustre offensive flurry by Phantom and this is a pretty one-sided affair. They wander around the building and Hero bumps big into the rail. Hero bumps big off the top to the apron on a DDT. Hero topes over the rail and Green Phantom isn't exactly Blue Panther taking it. I dunno about this Green Phantom guy. Hero makes with the Cravate Blockbuster which Phantom takes on his shoulder which was awesome for two. Hero takes a nice looking 3/4 Watanabe Screwdriver for two and I think we are looking at indie 2.9 wrestling. Phantom wins with a Poontangler and ya gotta say, "eh". Hero rules when he is in with someone who can work really stiff and push Hero on the mat. This felt like Hero realized that Green Phantom had no idea what to do in the match and just kinda Fit Finlayed a whole match around his bumps. It was following the blueprint of a Finlay/Brian Knobbs match. And at least Knobbs would brawl with him. But I don't want to see Hero carry a match by bumping for someone's mid-grade 1998 junior heavyweight offense. Fuck, it's Chris Hero. Punch him in the face. Let him punch you in the face. Try to take it to the mat. Do something. Yuck. So very disappointing....

Beef Wellington vs Super Dragon: I've always been indifferent to Super Dragon for whatever reason. I know I should like him as much as any of the other indie purveyours of international stiffness and all that, but I dunno- I just never bought him as an asskicker. I blame myself. And then I would just not watch his matches and then his biggest DVDVR booster- St.Phil Schneider- just stopped sending his matches to me. So it's been a while since I've seen him

wrestle. And that's where I am as this match starts, man. You gotta feel my vibe to understand where I'm coming from, dude. Here ya go. Super Dragon is a total cock at ringside and it's pretty great. This isn't Beef Wellington of Chris Benoit tagteam fame so this isn't like... amazing or anything. Super Dragon spends the first couple of minutes stopping Wellington from countering any of his holds by double stomping him whenever possible which just has to fucking suck if you are Wellington. And then he chops and forearms young Beef really hard. Super Dragon then oversells a punch in the buttocks by flying into a Psicosis corner bump- which is pretty baffling. It's like he tazed him or something but he didn't so it was pretty retarded- veering far too close to performance art than to professional wrestling art. I am analytically aghast. Goddam, Dragon hits the Ciclon Ramirez-level Total Death tope and I love Super Dragon. (I'm easy.) Super Dragon then stomps on Beef's face. And it's beautiful. Dragon cuts off Beef's comeback with a Curbstomp and it was superhurty because he does the stepover toehold simultaneously. The part where Super Dragon has Wellington in a Submission and starts kicking him in the head was neat. They trade stiff strikes. Beef Wellington drops the tassles (and his comedy gimmick if one is believe the Bloodstream Hype) and he is like Lawler in Memphis and makes with the forearms of stiffness. Dragon cuts him off with a German Suplex. Wellington hits a springboard DDT and gets a two and this is a lot like the Hero match- the local guy just doesn't really bring anything to the table and looks like he is being completely led by the hand through the match. He does a lot of very time-consuming set up to what is basically a low blow to set up a toprope Diamond Cutter. Super Dragon answers with a double stomp from the toprope across the back of the neck of the prone facedown Beef Wellington. And they trade two counts for a while as they indie build to the indie finishers section. Beef Wellington hits a high angle Tequila Sunrise Suplex and K Driller for the win. I dunno, it all seemed so off-hand and had the feel of a minor match (though the crowd was really into it). I dunno. They should have had Super Dragon wrestle Sexxy Eddy- there's your money match.

Fred Le Merveille vs Damian: This was exactly like a commissioner Tod Gordon versus Beulah evil commissioner versus valet match until they start taking ridiculous bumps - then it went from hysterically shitty brawling to taking sick W*ING 94-level bumps onto a rail that had been laid down on the floor. And hey, I'm a vampire, I love that shit. The rolling senton onto the guardrail was pretty great. The double stomp by Damian onto Fred who is sandwiched between two guardrails was pretty great. For TWO! Then they go back into the ring and it's pretty much all artless stiffness and creative suplex variations- as opposed to making me believe that they actually hate each other. It was ridiculously stiff but it wasn't focused hate-filled stiffness. It was more like something from Jackass- as stiffness for the sake of stiffness has replaced carving up each others foreheads with light tubing in the pantheon of indie freakshowness. The toprope Garvin Stomp was interesting. By the 6 rolling Germans spot, I longed for someone to go face first into a barbed wire board. Fred no-sells the Ohtani facescapes and I no-sell this match and I go look for a barbed-wire board to go facefirst into. But they go another 7 minutes anyway. More of a dare than a wrestling match. But not in a good way.

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POINT!/COUNTERPOINT!

You wanna play the numberz well the numberz is a game,
but the way I fuck your mother is a goddam shame....

(RAVEN MACK VS RYAN MULDOOMSTONE)

SUBJECT: THE BEST OF OX BAKER- Compilation of mysterious origin.

MATCH #1: OX BAKER vs. Blackie Guzman

RM: POINT! Ox Baker is not as hideously ugly as he is made out to be. Watching him methodically work up to the dreaded heart punch in his squash against Blackie Guzman, I'm noting how hard Ox is working to make himself seem ugly. Instead of having the full sexy beard of the outlaw biker/mountain man type that every married woman masturbates while thinking about late at night, he grows the chin bush but shaves off the upper parts of his cheek, giving himself an awkward shaped goatee type thing. And his eyebrows aren't any bigger than some of my more Mediterranean friends; it's just Ox, in his own self-hatred, twists up the outer ends like Abraham Lincoln's cousins did with their mustaches before climbing up on their bicycles with the big front wheels. Even calling himself "Ox"...if he came out, with a full beard and untwisted eyebrows, calling himself what his mama called him - J.J. Baker, and instead of glowering all freaky-like, he just gave a big smile out there to all the women, "Ox" would've easily pulled all the wool he could've ever wanted. I imagine some terrible initial teenage sexual experiences must've driven him to such visual self-mutilation. Perhaps the girl he first felt closely, in the back seat of a friend's Nova, while Too Fast For Love tweetered from the cassette deck, he loved more than he should have, because she was his first, though he was nothing but part of a string of sexual champions, her vagina booked back and forth like the AWA Southern title between the latest big gimmicks to hit the scene, and the young "Ox" was not to be her King Jerry Lawler. So she fucked other guys left and right, and Ox, green with his sexuality, sat at home, pining away within like real men do, and every time he heard "Piece of Your Action" and "Starry Eyes", he knew that "Too Fast For Love" was inevitably gonna follow, and it paralleled his young life, and his one stupid love that he couldn't let go of. It hurt a young "Ox", and all he could do was hide his pain with waxed eyebrows and carney scowls. And he threatened the public with a heart punch, not meant to kill (like it did twice), but only to make others share his pain. No, Ox Baker was not an ugly man at all. He was a beautiful butterfly of a human being, traumatized into concealing his magnificent wings.

(M)DS: COUNTERPOINT! Raven, you ignorant slut. That line doesn't really work here, but I wanted to work it in as quickly as possible. And about that, I feel uncomfortable ... especially because I'm about to describe Raven as an ignorant slut. Only not really. But I will say – with no disrespect – that I believe Raven is letting his very own unsettling appearance unfairly color his perception of Ox Baker. But I'm not here to talk about the appearance of the legendary Raven Mack. I'm here to talk about the appearance of the only slightly less legendary Ox Baker. And make no mistake about it, Ox Baker is a very ugly man. A hideous fucking monstrosity. Cartoonish, yes, but still hideous. They just don't make heels that look like this anymore. The idea that Ox Baker is working hard to make himself look ugly is flawed. He's working, sure

(aside from your Anne Ramsey's and Tor Johnson's, being ugly generally requires some work). But he's not working too hard at being ugly. And he's not working too hard at wrestling, either. But he doesn't really need to ... because he's really fucking ugly. That's one of those things in wrestling, as in other performing arts: you can get plenty of mileage out of mere presence. That's fair. As fair as life, anyway. I've yet to see evidence that Rufus R. "Freight Train" Jones is T.L.G.L.W. ("The Latest Great Lost Worker"), but you know what? I'll watch a Rufus R. "Freight Train" Jones match, because he was a lovable little fucker in the ring. With my very own eyes as a child, I saw him get huge pops out of wrestling audiences just for doing a little shimmy-shake across the ring. I like stuff like that sometimes. Sorry. Anyway, this match isn't much to speak of. Blackie Guzman is absolutely the name I will use on my fake I.D. when I build a time machine and return to a time when I needed a fake I.D. He's a long way from Blackie Lawless of W.A.S.P. but he did remind me that I want to listen to a little more W.A.S.P. these days. "School Daze" fucking rules – "I pledge allegiance and I bet they're gonna drive me crazy yet!" I really like that shit. And Blackie Lawless? Talk about a guy who got a few extra miles off of pure stage presence. He worked to make himself ugly, too. I like "Fuck Like a Beast" more than I like "Too Fast for Love," but maybe I'm saying that because Raven's story of unrequited juvenile love set against the soundtrack of poorly intentioned juvenile metal is a story that cuts a little ... too close ... to home ... for me. Maybe. MAYBE. Or maybe not. I may have lost the point of this counterpoint. I would also like to add that I'd loved the commentator for this match – I'm assuming it's from Detroit in the mid-to-late seventies, because he's talking about Ox Baker taking on The Sheik? He's really good. Smooth, melodious tones. You know he did overnights on some crazy Detroit FM station and likes to tell the tale of the time he got some trim in the studio while playing a Steely Dan album side. "As long as the mood is right ... effffff ... emmmmmmm No static at all!!!!!!!!!!!!!! ..."

MATCH #2- OX BAKER vs. RON MARTINELLI

(M)DS: POINT! I've not been writing for the DVDVR for very long - a very short time, actually. But I have been watching wrestling for a long time, and I honestly love it. Most of the time. Sometimes, not so much. This match? Not so much. This would be the match - if you were forced to judge the entire art form on this one match - that should convince you that professional wrestling is really fucking stupid, nearly retarded, and all things considered, a completely worthless pursuit. Slow, plodding, emotion-free ... I really felt like a dunce for even watching this. It's not interesting even on a trainwreck level, and whatever tiny "old school" thrill there is to listening to the old time announcer, or staring at a young Tommy Young's mop-top, it vanishes in about thirty seconds. Suddenly, you are watching nothing more than two really goofy looking guys doing really goofy looking stuff in a ring. Even the crowd watching this swill - what? thirty years ago? - knew the deal. They're as excited as they would be at a church picnic - a really boring church picnic. If you don't sometimes feel like a shithead for watching wrestling, you can't be all that self-aware.

RM: COUNTERPOINT! In all the time you've been writing for the DVDVR, that's probably the most stupidest thing you've said. This is a television match, featuring the then North American champion. The point was for a crowd full of drunken lazy union workers to sit there and be upset

by the brutality of big Ox Baker, a champion who spit upon everything they believed in - playing by the rules, keeping your nose clean, keeping your hair normal looking, and living the good life, one paycheck at a time. Tex McKenzie on the color commentating duties was there as the force to stop this monstrous Ox. It was foreplay. I imagine not too long after this, some Saturday night arena was rocking as Big Tex two-stepped his way around the deadly heart punch for ten minutes, and brought that championship belt back home to the side of good.

(M)DS: REBUTTAL! Am I allowed a rebuttal? I fucking believe I am. There's no way that's the most stupidest thing I've said – and if per chance it is, it won't be long before I top it. You don't have to explain the mechanics of what this match was supposed to accomplish – I get that. I'm sayin, it didn't work. Check out that crowd of “drunken lazy union workers” – they look like they're ready to get back to the plant floor. Ox Baker doesn't manage to enrage anyone. Watch when he leaves the ring and starts to cock back and threaten those in the front row. Nothing. NOTHING. I've flinched more than that after having a plastic bag float toward my windshield when driving. I know what “Big Tex” was there to do, but all he did was fail to deliver a complete thought on commentary (“I'm glad Ox Baker is here because ... competition and he ... look at that ...zzzzzzzz.”) and make me think he was actually Uncle Leo from “Seinfeld” with a gym towel wrapped around his neck. The big Tex/Ox confrontation at the end had all the tension of your average Burger King drive-thru transaction. Dullsville, daddy. I don't imagine an arena rocking on a Saturday as a result. I imagine a less-than-3/4ths-full civic center where the promoter lost his shirt, Ron Martenelli got stiffed at the pay window, Tex McKenzie wished he had a Polaroid camera, and Ox Baker gave birth to a foul atrocity in the locker room commode. And if Ox Baker was the North American champ, where was the belt? WHERE WAS THE BELT?!? Paper. Fucking. Champion.

RM: RE-REBUTTAL! Maybe the belt was too shiny and beautiful that it'd take away from his Mongolian warlord get-up he wore back then. Maybe, since there was no chance any of those slack-jawed washed-ups or wash-outs they threw in the Big Time ring against him could ever counter the dreaded heart punch (which killed two men), so he didn't even need to bring out the belt. He killed people. Of course, it's wrestling, so he didn't, just Ray Gunkel had a heart attack during a match, so Ox Baker capitalized on it. Why don't people do that? I mean, let's take Chris Candido for example (since I'm gonna piss on a corpse, I don't want to pick a fresh one)...he died recently. Who was his last match against? Probably Josh Abercrombie or Claudio Castagnoli or someone else who is most likely a wonderfully big wrestling fish in the small pond of Indy America on the Internet, but if you stopped one hundred people in Steve Austin or Undertaker t-shirts at the flea market, none of them would know who the fuck it was, and a couple of them would call you derogatory things that refer to men engaging in sexual relations with each other. But what if one of these guys HAD wrestled Candido's last match before he kicked it...why shouldn't they come out a month later bragging about how their double underhook fujiwara fishhook-plex from the second rope had KILLED Candido? I mean, we've become such pussies about everything that gets done and how you have to respect everything, yet everybody loves nothing more than being a judgemental shithead in smarky ways. People will say, “He was awesome, he gave his life to wrestling,” but if a guy dies and you can't capitalize on his death with the wrestling, then he didn't truly give his life to wrestling - he just

lived it in wrestling. Lavar Arrington is my favorite Redskin for the simple fact he gave Troy Aikman the concussion that knocked him out of football. Who gave Bret Hart his last concussion? That guy should be WWE champion, whoever he is, with that being his gimmick. Claudio Castagnoli might get booed by the "let's be respectful to show how we're not ignorant marks" ROH crowd if he was running around bragging about how he killed Chris Candido, but ol' Double C - the living one - could carry the hatred of that gimmick right to the motherfuckin' bank. And while I got a chance to rebut, let me tell you something about calling me an ignorant slut. We were discussing this whole thing at work the other day because I had left a jobsite and this girl was walking by and was all waving at me and shit, and she looked good enough, and the next day I found out she went to our jobsite and had been canvassing the neighborhood selling magazine subscriptions, but almost ended up going into the house we were painting to get high with and give the dude I work with a blowjob, but her ride came right when they were getting ready to go inside. Me and that dude agreed she was a slut, and the college kid doofus from New Jersey working with us was all uptight about having sex with a slut. But here's how we broke it down - there's a big difference between a whore and a slut. A whore uses sex to feel accepted by whoever she lets poke himself into her, and she doesn't necessarily enjoy it, she just does it to achieve higher self-esteem. A slut, however, enjoys sex, and wants to have it, and is not ashamed to indulge that desire. What's wrong with that? That's great. Don't we all, as men, want to have sex? Who would we have sex with if it weren't for enthusiastic sluts? Whores, that's who. And they are dark and tragic figures and will make you feel like a bad Bukowski poem real quick. So when it comes to wrestling, yeah, I am a slut, and not a whore. I don't like what I'm supposed to like to gain self-esteem and be accepted. I know what I like, and I want to indulge in that, as much as possible. And yeah, I'm ignorant. I'll be honest here - I've probably seen like four Hashimoto matches my whole life (but I do remember enjoying two of them immensely), mostly because I don't like the sound of the Japanese language. Linguistically, it doesn't jibe with me, so aurally, I hate watching puro tapes. So I am ignorant. I've never booked Johnny Saint & Johnny Valentine vs. Samoa Joe & Dean Malenko in an Iron-Man tag title bout in TNM. But if I can see Scotty Blaze and Preston Quinn beat the shit out of each other within an hour of my house once a month for the next year, then I'll go to that shit. Because I AM an ignorant slut - I just want good real-looking wrestling with some goddamned emotional attachment, and I don't want it to stop, no, don't stop, go deeper, oh motherfuckin' yeah.

(M)DS: RE-RE-RE-REBUTAL! Oh. I mean ummmm yeah, cool, man ... I was ... I was just making reference to that old "Saturday Night Live" sketch with Dan Aykroyd and Jane Curtin. I, uh ... I didn't mean for you to have to ... you know, OPEN UP and all. I think we want the same thing from wrestling ... I just ain't getting the "good real-looking" wrestling vibe off of Ox Baker like I thought I would. Let's fast-forward the tape. I think Buggy McGraw is on here ... now HE'S really fucking awesome.

TO BE CONTIUED!

~+~

Classic St Louis Wrestling Volume 2
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Dave- friend, bachelor, encyclopedic wrestling scholar, occasional drinking companion- got these from High Spots and we (Dave, Tim, Brian, Satan Pro, myself) were all hanging out at Satan Pro's house watching Sayama wrestle Jim motherfucking Breaks and Akira Maeda wrestle Giant Haystacks when we switched to the Murdock-drenched St Louis stuff. Dave let me borrow his first three volumes and I promised that if I actually BLEW MY STACK~! watching Murdock carry Dick the Bruiser, I'd aim for the top of the dvds- just to make sure they would still play. Jiminy! this is a fucking wondrous collection of wrestling. I'm starting with volume 2 because Dave, Tim and Brian all got together when I was helping my wife go through a false labour (if I remember correctly) and they watched the Johnny Valentine match from 1962 and all they would talk about was that match in hushed tones for weeks so I'm not waiting to watch it. I am impetuous like that and shit. TO THE CHASE!

Harley Race vs Fritz Von Erich/ David Von Erich- 1979: The important part of being married is staying married- and to stay married, you have to do things for your partner, and you have to do them with hard, cold discipline. It is with hard, cold discipline that I wash the dishes (most) nights and tonight was no exception. Though it was one in the morning and the dinner dishes and the cake-making pans (from my youngest daughter's birthday today) loomed large in the kitchen, I- as a man- had to put aside my childish ways and I- as a man- had to wash the dishes to keep the motherfucking ants from coming back into the house. So I was washing dishes and listening to MARRIED WITH CHILDREN of FX on tv when my oldest son wandered into the living room-dining room-kitchen area (which is basically 500 square feet area that isn't the bedrooms). I walked over and he was settling down from a bad dream and I turned it to the Disney channel so he could fall asleep to the useless and inoffensive modern Mickey Mouse cartoon they were playing (which I assume they play at fuckin 2 o'clock in the morning for just this kind of occasion. If that's not the reason, I don't want to know the reason.) I finished the dishes and he was drifting into sleep on the couch. I sat down next to him and said, "Let's watch some wrestling" (knowing that it would definately get to go to sleep) and I started the dvd that I had put in earlier- this one that I am reviewing. This match wasn't really a handicap match. This was a singles match between Harley Race and David Von Erich. If Harley Race pinned David, he had to immediately wrestle Fritz. If Harley could beat both in thirty minutes, neither Von Erich would be a contender for Harley's NWA World title anymore. And Harley demanded this match because he wanted to nip the rivalry for his belt by David Von Erich in the bud. The eldest son of Fritz had already taken Harley to a 30 minute draw in Texas and Harley was feeling the heat to quash this once and for all. Harley Race was a champion and this match is what a champion did back then. they lock up and my mind was flush with memories of 1979. This was from May 1979. In December 1978, my dad died suddenly from a heart attack at age 34. He smoked and drank and was a lot like me now- an overly self-aware over-educated quasi-redneck who drank away a lot of stress while trying to never show any of that to his four kids. It was just months after he took me to see this same Harley Race wrestle Dick Murdock in Little Rock- as we lived in Jacksonville, Arkansas- a suburb with the Air Force base we lived on. By May 1979, I was pretty much reintegrated into the family, church and school of my mother's family- as we had moved back to Virginia immediately after my dad died.

While having a strong religious conversion and being washed in the blood of the lamb in my Southern Baptist church, I also got back into Mid-Atlantic wrestling. Mid-Atlantic was Johnny Valentine and Wahoo McDaniel and Blackjack Mulligan. My journey to the middle of America was the Arkansas and Texas territories- the Von Erchs, Dick Murdock, Bob Sweetan, Rocky Johnson. So this match was strange to me this evening. This match was like finding a picture of my friend in Arkansas from a year after I had left. I saw Harley Race again pretty soon after moving back to Virginia- as he and Blackjack Mulligan showed a young me what the fuck a bladejob should look like as Blackjack piledrove Harley to the concrete of the floor of the Norfolk Scope and arose in a layer of blood- bleeding on the same floor where Dr J and George Gervin had played basketball in my other reason to ever go to the Scope. But David Von Erch was the old friend I hadn't seen since I was 12. I remember reading about him dying in the Apter mags but it doesn't affect you until you see him wrestle. I remember him on Texas wrestling that we would get with the air force bases early version of cable. He seemed bigger when I was 12. And then I watch him get Harley Race in a headlock and pat my own son on the head as he falls asleep and I think of horror that Fritz Von Erch must have felt. I have four kids. I used to joke about the Von Erchs. Then I had four kids. I cannot for the life of me understand how Fritz Von Erch did not put a gun in his mouth and pull the trigger. We had one miscarriage between my first child and my other three and that is the deepest innermost horror I have ever experienced. It reversed the part about me being washed in the blood of the lamb. But to raise your children and have them die- one by one. I have nothing but respect for Fritz Von Erch for staying alive for his grandkids and living son. I can't even imagine what he went through. Which takes me back into the match. One of my pre-conceptions of borrowing these dvds is that I would change my mind about the role of Harley Race. Race was an NWA heavyweight champion and every time I ever saw him was making Dick Murdock or Wahoo McDaniel look like fucking God-killers to set up the big houseshow defense of the belt. I figured that finally seeing Harley Race in his home territory that he would basically wrestle like Wahoo in Mid-Atlantic or Dick Murdock in Arkansas- the man, beating everybody else in the territory by either being the over babyface or the cowardly heel. The TRUE beauty of this match is that it reinforces my preconceived notions of Harley Race as NWA World Champion. Harley Race makes David Von Erch look like he truly was one match away from the world championship. And this is why I liked Harley Race as world champion more than I liked the great great Ric Flair as world champion- Harley Race was a fucking ass-stomper. He was like Ted DiBiase. He wasn't a cheating, cowardly heel. He would beat the shit out of you. I think that style of wrestling is harder to pull off when you don't have the cowardly heel schickt to fall back on when you have to make every local guy look great for the local popped house. Here is this match, Harley is the World Champion and to live with himself, he has to go through the young upstart Von Erch. Harley tries to escape a headlock for the first 7 minutes and I don't care if I sound like a fucking crusty old shithead when I say that it is fucking SUBLIME wrestling. Race struggling to escape and make it all to his advantage and the countering is a completely lost art in my beloved Professional Wrestling. You can create all the MUGAs and NWA-Somewheres you want, but you can't make a crowd get fucking molten from working a headlock like Harley Race can and it would work today if anybody had this level of psychology at their disposal. Harley finally gets David to break in the ropes and Race CRUSHES David's face with a headbutt. Race and David trade missed elbow drops and David bodyslams Race and Race sells the pain with the ballet of twisting and spinning to the pain in

that weird way he would sell. And they go back to the headlock. Race gets David in the ropes and throws his shoulder into David's stomach until David flies to the floor. Race goes for the Piledriver to the floor but David backdrops him to the floor. David gets some nearfalls at the ten minute mark but Race headbutts him in the stomach. David reverses a suplex into his own and David brings punches that shouldn't have been denied the world when he died. Race crushes David face with a headbutt while in the ropes. Race fucking CRUSHES Von Erich's face with just fucking horrendously violent kneedrops. Race gets a neckbreaker for two and hits another flying mare. Race just fucking destroys David with a diving headbutt. Race goes up top for the second rope diving headbutt but he dives into an Iron Claw. Race fucking saws the top of his own head off to conjure enough blood to make David Von Erich's finisher look like it could legitimately guide him to a win over Race. Blood spews all over Race and Von Erich puts him out and wins the match. And I assume the rematch was a sellout. Kevin and Fritz comes out and joins David. I remember the Von Erichs when they were all alive. Kerry was 15 and would help his brother beat Big John Studd or King Kong Brodie. It was an innocent time and I was removed from the ugliness of what became of the Von Erich by the ugly circumstances of my own family. It was bittersweet seeing it all again.

Fabulous Moolah vs Winona Littleheart: The 70s had the ethnically specific wrestling styles. We all know and remember the way Thunderbolt Patterson, Rufus R. Frieghttrain Jones and Tony Atlas were all about funky spasms and impenetrable skulls. The 70s ethnic Indian wrestling style was just as weird. Littleheart wrestles the style just like all the Youngbloods- hyperactive, earnest face, a lot of stomping to show she fired up. Luckily, you also had wrestlers like Wahoo who wrestled against this style for the most part by wrestling as a ass-stomping redneck. Moolah is pretty great in this- bringing the no nonsense knees to the face for Littleheart to work her wardances around. Moolah has really great lesbianic punches to the face that makes one weep at the closing of GAEA- a promo 27 years later.

(They show a bunch of finishes to matches- including an unwatchable Bobo Brazil handicapped match- and have a rockumentary on the Giants of Wrestling: Andre and Bruiser Brodie.)

Johnny Valentine vs Bill Frazier- Larry Matsyk says 1962, the dvd box says 1964: Joe Garagiola is the announcer for this and boy does that bring back memories- as I believe he was the announcer of every game I ever saw the Big Red Machine play. The Chase is a hotel and the ballroom is gigantic. Everybody is dressed up and eating. Meanwhile, Johnny Valentine looks like complete fucking psycho without even trying, I don't think. I remember Valentine when I was a child, 12 years after this match, when he was in Mid-Atlantic right before the plane crash. He was a heel and he was a fun heel- doing goofy angles with Ken Patera. Here, it's just weird. It's like that Benoit-Regal match last night- you go along figuring some wrestling is pretty good and then you see a match that reminds you of what you really love in the artform. This match is like that with 60s wrestling. I dig the Moose Cholak bumpfests. I can get into Nature Boy Buddy Rogers' telling a simple story that drives a crowd insane. And then you see Johnny Valentine in 1962. Frazier does basic rudimentary heel stuff to get out of wrestling holds. Valentine's eyes get really big and you cannot read what he is feeling or thinking- you just know that he looks possessed. And he just fucking crushes Frazier with a forearm across the nape of the neck.

And he kicks Frazier in the face and it is as violent as anything I saw last night between two of my all-time favorite wrestlers busting each other up hardway. It also made me think that I don't believe Valentine's facial expressions are a conscious decision. I think that his facial expressions were copied by others in a mannered way- because he wasn't wrestling heel and yet you see heels make those facial expressions now when they get the upperhand. Johnny Valentine is just PRIMAL and intense and everything you like about the Professional Wrestling- so you walk away going, "Oh yeah, it's all about the intensity." Valentine was like that in studio matches 12 years later when I saw him in Mid-Atlantic and I need so much more Valentine footage.

Pat O'Connor vs Lorenzo Rarente- 1962: When I got these dvd's from Dave, we were over at Satan Pro's house watching volume one- and on volume one (that will be reviewed in 149- out in two weeks) there is this just fucking AWWWWWESOME match where Pat O'Connor and Dick Murdock just beat the living breathing dogshit out of each other and I was torqued about finally seeing Pat O'Connor wrestle and seeing that he was man enough to bring the ass-stomp punch for punch with Dick Murdock. This match is 17 years prior to the Murdock match and it is almost two different wrestlers as you can imagine- what with the time difference and all. It's quite a bit more like your usual 60s TV match- except this has the added dimension of being face versus face so... yeah. It's not against Dick Murdock. And yeah. They show this right after you see the amazingness of Johnny Valentine. So yeah. O'Connor is really neat keeping a hammerlock while being snapmared and he does go all carney as the Scientific Wrestling marches on. And Parente is a good Antonio Rocco knock-off. And O'Connor does a sweet brand of rolling matwork that is lost to the earth except to the beaut of Lucha Libre- where I had seen the same spinning match stylings by the Villanos and Blue Panther. So there is that. Plus it ends in the first ever 2-count roll-up sequence. But yeah there was a postmatch hug. So THUS- Not Valentine. (There is a charming part postmatch where Pat O'Connor demonstrates all these carney holds on Joe Garigiola and it's fun. But yeah.)

Dick Murdock/Bulldog Bob Brown vs Gene Kiniski/Kevin Von Erich- 1979: I forgot that Kevin was just as over and was probably a more effective babyface than his brothers. His pre-match interview with Larry Matysik after losing to Ron Starr is so EARNEST that you have to go for him in your heart of hearts. This whole match is based on Dick Murdock being the Missouri Champion and he's trying to avoid Kevin and his Verdamt Iron Claw. Bulldog Brown and Murdock beat the crap out of the four hundred year old Kiniski but Kiniski is great in this selling the beating and doing aging former champion pseudo-Grand Offensive Flurry. While they are beating the hell out of the young Kevin, I dig Kiniski on the apron acting like Fritz made Kevin Kiniski's responsibility and that Kiniski was letting down his old friend by letting his son get the hell kicked out of him by Dick Murdock. Plus you have the "Who is the Greatest Canadian Athlete?" subtext between Brown (from Quebec) and kiniski (from Alberta) And let me say this- if you don't understand who much I love Dick Murdock, I don't think we can ever be friends. He is so great in this match- especially selling Kevin's claw. Somebody in Japan must have had a claw finisher because you can tell that Murdock thought up a bunch of ways you would be able to escape- by positioning your head a certain way and driving up with your legs (which he does) and then thrashing around in desperation. The Kiniski-Brown hatred is the undercurrent of

Kevin's babyface heat segment- as Kiniski would get drawn into the ring anytime Brown yells at him and allows Murdock to destroy Von Erich. Brown is a fun wrestler in an aging Canadian kind of way. He has big chops and he looks like knows secrets about Killer Karl Kox and the Missouri Mauler that you would want to hear if you got him drunk in the hotel bar. I assume he jobbed to Angelo Mosca more times than Paul Jones jobbed to the Super Destroyer. Kevin on the apron is really great. He is so incensed and will punch Murdock dead in the face before being driven back by the refs. Kiniski has nice punches and kills Murdock in the ample gut and makes the molten tag to allow Kevin to apply the Claw. Brown eventually makes the save and it goes all crazy with folks flying everywhere. They go back to beating the hell out of Kevin as Murdock has tasted the Claw and now must destroy the second eldest of the Von Erich clan. Murdock hits the elbows across the nose that makes you remember why you love Fit Finlay. The ECW the ending when Murdock gets a pinfall with his feet on the ropes but the auxillary ref in the match (this might have been a St Louis thing) has the match restarted and it all goes completely to hell, leading to the DDQ after Murdock and Von Erich destroy the announcer set and Von Erich gets a microphone stand to the throat to break a Claw on the floor. This match was fun.

The postmatch promo but Murdock IS AMAAAAAAAAZING. Let me transcribe:

LARRY MATYSIK: "During the break, we've been hearing a monologue about how Dick Murdock has been robbed of a victory- but Dick, the ref called for a double disqualification- both teams disqualified."

DICK MURDOCK: "How...can anyone in their right mind... disqualify a team with the calibre of professionalism as Bob Brown and Dick Murdock? Now you've seen Gene Kiniski- the former world's heavyweight champion and Canada's greatest athlete- WHICH MEANS NOTHING IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA- you saw a snotty nosed punk kid, Kevin von Erich- who I will admit is a good athlete- he works out and takes care of his body- his family has a good (indecipherable) in professional wrestling. A good one but nowhere near Frankie Hill Murdock, my dad or Farmer Jones, my uncle. And Slammin Sammy Mushnick will tell you that."

LM: "Dick, that's not the point- you were complaining that you had a victory taken away from you and these people in the audience will agree with the referee that you had your feet in the ropes."

DM: "Hey. What can I tell you? Everyone of these freeloaders sittin out here- it don't matter who I'm wrestling, they're always rootin for the other person, right? this town has been very, very..... impartial to Dick Murdock. I've been robbed a lot of times..."

LM: "Kevin Von Erich is standing here watching you.. Kevin you got something to say."

KEVIN VON ERICH: "I've got something to settle with you and- by God!- I'm gonna settle it."

DM: "Let me say one thing- if you can't come out here and talk without almost crying, go on back Dallas, boy. Let me tell you- now hold it, boy- if you freeloaders will listen, pay attention, I'll answer your challenge, Von Erich.

KVE: "My names not 'boy'. I'm not a kid!"

DM: "You're a snotty nosed punk kid."

LM: "That's no way to talk- if you want a match talk to Sam Mushnick...:

DM: "If the shoe fits, wear it. Hey, is this my interview?"

LM: "Go ahead- say what you gotta say..."

DM: "Now I know I'm a professional athlete and I sign contracts- GO ON HOME BOY AND CRY TO YOUR MOMMA AND DADDY!- and I know some day I'm gonna have to wrestle that little kid, turn him over my knee and slap him like a little baby and send him back down to Dallas. Now everybody knows the state of Texas is divided in half- the northern and southern part- and everybody knows that everybody who comes in from down there are cissies and punks and everybody who lives up where I live are MEN. Now Sam Mushnick- I'll say this, he is probably the world's greatest wrestling promoter..."

LM: "That's a change of tune from you..."

DM: "But he's also a liar and thief. If he wants to make a contract for me to wrestle Kevin Von Erich, I'll wrestle him right here on KBLM next week. I'll answer that challenge."

(They watch the footage of the discounted fall. And Murdock notes Von Erich pushed up with "his muscular body" to make it look like Murdock's legs were on the ropes.)

DM: I useta think that KBLM had the best camera men and that this was the best television show in the world but- after seeing this, I see that they use trick photography like Mushnick uses when he makes his judgements!"

LM: "Well, Dick, you've made your point. Your challenge is out in the open and we'll see what develops"

Which leads to the next match on the dvd...

Dick Murdock vs Kevin Von Erich: Murdock sells a wad of Von Erich offense and then super-sells the Iron Claw again. Bulldog Brown makes the run-in and Gene Kiniski makes the save and you have your set-up for the houseshow. Dick Murdock is incomparably great- the greatest.

(The Bonus Footage Bulldog Bob Brown beating a young Billy Joel looking guy. Bob Sweetan and Pat O'Connor not being in a match where the two enhancement talent carry the body of the match and there is also a match with a very young, astoundingly spankable Debbie Combs. You will be spent)

I really can't recommend this dvd enough.

~+~

I WAN MID SOUTH

KING OF THE DEATH MATCH TOURNAMENT #1

2000

WORDS: RAVEN MACK
PICTURES: DEAN RASMUSSEN

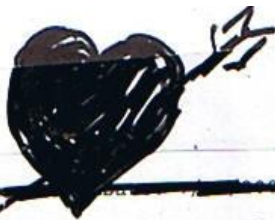
OCTOBER 20/21/2000

BACK BEFORE IAN ROTTEN HAD CAPITALIZED ON
ON TH LIGHTWEIGHT
PAN BE G AND
CON TORTING EACH OTHER IN HONORABLE BATTLE,
IAN WAS CAPITALIZING ON THE BLOODLUST OF A MORE
TO SEE BLOOD
NGE THINGS YOU
ADITIONAL WRESTLING.



DO THE YOUNG LADIES OF THE
INDUSTRIAL WASTELAND OF SO,
INDIAN LOVE SUICIDE KIDMORE
THAT 2 TUFF TONY LOVES WEED?
GETTING THUMB TACKS STUCK
IN SUICIDE'S BACK (WHY DOES
HE HAVE A LOWER BACK TATTOO
AT HIS BELT LINE?) AND IN
TONY'S SKULL IS SUPPOSED TO
SUPPLANT ACTUAL EMOTION. I
HAVE A LITTLE JELLY JAR
FULL OF SOME INSANE FLOYD
COUNTY WEED SOMEONE GAVE
ME A MONTH BACK THAT I
WOULD RATHER GO SIT IN THE
BACK YARD AND SMOKE THAN
SULLY MYSELF BY OVER-ANAL-
YZING THIS MATCH, AND

I'M SURE BOTH 2 TUFF TONY AND SUICIDE KID WOULD RATHER SIT IN THEIR
BACKYARD AND SMOKE A BOWL THAN WATCH THIS MATCH AS WELL.



X OX

I'M FROM MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
WHERE WE WRESTLE; WE DON'T
USE A BUNCH OF BULLSHIT LIKE
THUMBSTACKS LIKE YOU FUCKERS
AROUND HERE
DO.



YOU BUY AN OLD GREYHOUND BUS FROM
SOME BLUEGRASS ACT THAT HAS TO CALL
IT QUITS BECAUSE THE LAST SON OF THE LAST
ORIGINAL MEMBER OF THE BAND DIED FROM LUNG
CANCER, SLAP TODD MORTON, DOUG GILBERT, TOMMY
RICH, TRACY SMOTHERS, AND JAMIE DUNDEE ON
IT, BOOK A ONE-MONTH TOUR OF INDY PROMOTIONS,
LIKE FOUR SHOWS A WEEK, TELL THEM THEY'LL SPLIT
A MILLION DOLLARS FOUR WAYS IF THEY MAKE IT TO
AND PERFORM ON EVERY BOOKED SHOW THAT MONTH,
AND FOLLOW THEM WITH A COUPLE CAMERAS AND
YOU'D HAVE A BETTER "REALITY TV" THAN ANYTHING
THAT'S EVER BEEN ON TV.

X O X O X



Time: 11:14 AM
Subject: Director Attention

KILL VIG
BUS NICK
DRE LOCKE
NE R M

CD OR
IS WHERE
DO IT C
OM THIS
SE EVER

[Manslaughter vs. Richard X]
Scrawny light-heavyweight in-house wrestling school star student vs. Texas Chainsaw Massacre
Gimmick #49 - indy wrestling at its indiest!

[Puppet the Psycho Dwarf vs. Playtoy T.O.]
If Puppet the midget killing wrestler and Bushwick Bill the one-eyed dreadlocked murderous rapper never make some sort of CD or DVD together, then America is nowhere near the multicultural melting pot it claims to be.

I wonder if Sky Lo Lo and Little Beaver sit around talking about how this isn't wrestling to them
Don't all midgets live forever, unless they were afflicted with the Munchkin Curse?

DDT THE MIDGET
THEN THEY WOULD COLLABORATE IN
ANOTHER ART FORM.



ADDLED DECADE WITH BAD TATTOOS IS THE
SAVIOUR OF STRIP MALLS SOUTHERN INDIANA'S INDUST
FORCE WASTELAND FROM THE
OF EVIL HILLBILLI



WHEN NECRO-BUTTER
DISAPPEARED FROM IWA
A COUPLE YEARS BACK,
I HEARD HE WITH
UNCLE MONKEY.

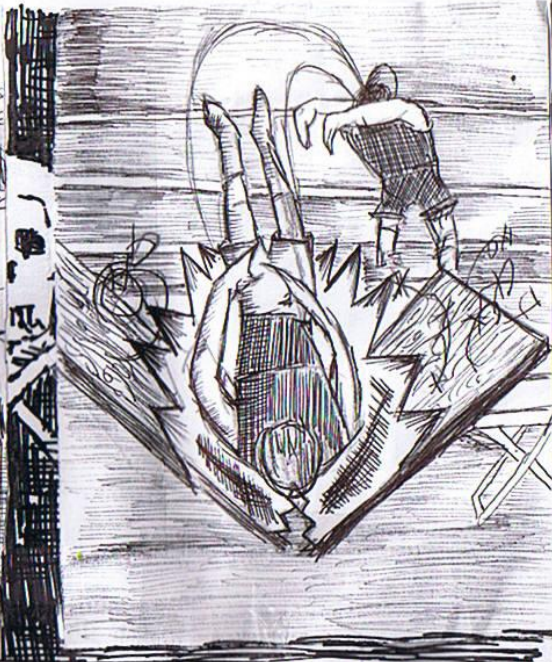
OH, THE COCKOUTS
THEY MUST HAVE
HAD. AS USUAL
AYL BLEEDS EASY.
A COORS LIGHT-
FLAVORED GUSHER.

UNCLE
HONKEY
VS
AXL
ROTTEN

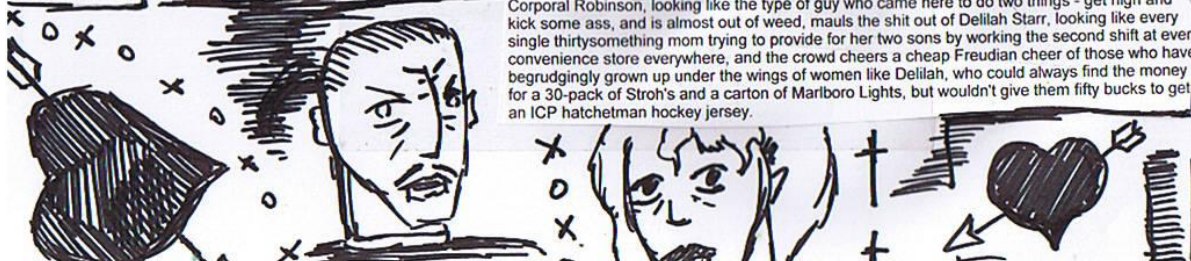


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YES, YOU ARE ON THE WAY UP, IF LUCKY,
UP TO
HEIGHTS NEVER EVEN DREAMED
OF BY
MYSELF, SO I WILL
TAKE
OUT ON
MY LIFE'S FRUSTRATIONS
YOU TONIGHT, BECAUSE
HERE AND ONLY
HERE, I
AM THE MAN
AND IF YOU
CAN ACCEPT
THAT SITUATION,
I WILL ALLOW
YOU TO DEFEAT
ME WITHIN THE
WORKED
PARABLES OF
THIS
CULT
PROM-
OTION
I HAVE
CREATED



Corporal Robinson, looking like the type of guy who came here to do two things - get high and kick some ass, and is almost out of weed, mauls the shit out of Delilah Starr, looking like every single thirtysomething mom trying to provide for her two sons by working the second shift at every convenience store everywhere, and the crowd cheers a cheap Freudian cheer of those who have begrudgingly grown up under the wings of women like Delilah, who could always find the money for a 30-pack of Stroh's and a carton of Marlboro Lights, but wouldn't give them fifty bucks to get an ICP hatchetman hockey jersey.



X O  X 

~!~

BEST OF INOKI VOLUME 1 (AG)

Antonio Inoki. A pretty good wrestler. Worthy of a clipfest from Highspots. Here is the skinny on this tape. All matches are clipped, but this tape would be a good primer for the Inoki novice.

1 - Inoki vs. Karl Gotch - 03-06-72 -- Just some beautiful wrestling here. Not much Gotch exists on tape, for obvious reasons, but this is about as good as it gets.

2 - Inoki vs. Tiger Jeet Singh - 06-26-74 -- Heavily clipped, great heat. Singh's gimmick should be a lesson to the Turbanators and the WWE Arabs. He seems, like, crazy. Not the best pure wrestling match on the tape.

3 - Inoki vs. Billy Robinson - 12-11-75 -- Not as great as the Tsuruta matches Robinson had, but definitely worth seeing. Billy Robinson is a fine pro wrestler.

4 - Inoki vs. Stan Hansen - 09-02-77 -- Stiff, brutal, fast action. Hansen was a force of nature. Inoki keeps up. One of the great things about Inoki is that he often adjusts to what workers do. Clipped, wish there had been more.

5 - Inoki vs. Bob Backlund - 11-30-79 -- Backlund is not my cup of tea, but I dig the end where he acts like a whiny little bitch, jobbed out like a punk. Very neat spot here -- Inoki has the short-armed scissors on Backlund, who dead lifts Inoki and deposits him on the top rope. I've seen this done before, but never better.

6 - Inoki vs. Hulk Hogan - 06-02-83 -- Did Hogan SHOOT on Inoki, as suggested here and there? No. Inoki drags Hogan around the ring. Walks him through wrestling sequences. Hogan worked this match as if he were at gunpoint. Inoki sells so well that Hogan has the best match of

his early career in spite of being little more than a demonstration model. Hogan at least works the crowd. That's always nice to see.

Other stuff is on the tape, and I will get to it in a future issue. That said, you won't go wrong with this tape, if you have an interest in seeing one of the best wrestlers ever against the biggest names of his time in clipped form.

~!~

!!

I'm lost without a clue- So how can I undo-

The tangle of these webs I keep weaving

SINGLES GOING STEADY

I don't know if I should be believing

Deceptive perceiving- But if you don't mind I don't mind

!!

CM Punk, Ace Steel, Danny Dominion & Chris Hero vs. 2 Cold Scorpio, Ian Rotten, Suicide Kid & Colt Cabana - elimination match - August 11, 2001 - IWA Mid South- (RAVEN MACK):
Dichotomies and transitions. In the overall sense, for me, this was a signifying event, putting the earlier bludgeon style of IWA on par with the technical style that Ian tapped into with guys like Punk and Hero and Cabana becoming IWA mainstays. And in the more analytical sense, it's a funny match because you have 2 Cold, a guy who was not too far removed from his last major American company stint, where he was nothing more than a Vince-ified stereotype that could do a 450 splash; and on the other side, you have a young Punk, who just signed into the sports entertainment machine. Punk is decent on the mic, relative to everyone else in indy wrestling who doesn't even try it seems, and Punk is good enough in the ring to be a good overall package. But when has Vince McMahon let a good overall package be good? It seems the WWE is hellbent on reinventing the wheel most of the time, so that even beyond the legal trademarks they own, they can claim they made somebody, by remaking them. The Kingdom of Smartmarkery is sure CM can't miss, a solid prospect to bring "real" wrestling fans some real wrestling in sports entertainment. Let me tell you something - if Sage Francis was signed to Columbia Records, he'd be making a "protest" song about how sure, America has made some mistakes, but terrorists are evil, and you have to do what's best. In the process of growing old, we all are tempted to sell-out, and that doesn't necessarily mean making money, but compromising the principles of our youth to accomodate the necessities of our age. In other words, to me, CM Punk is a sell-out, not because he's trying to make some money, but because I remember him saying how he had no desire to go to the WWE a few years back. Can you grow with age, and change? Sure. But I'm from the old school south, stubborn to a fault. If I make outright proclamations about something from a semi-moral imperative at a younger age, I will never go back on that, regardless of whether I've changed my mind about it or not as I grow older.

But more power to CM Punk; I wish him all the best. Brightest scenario - he has a multi-year run with a couple of fat pushes like a Matt Hardy. Darkest scenario - Vince does what he does and tries to test a man's will in life and Punk ends up a fuckin' crack addict main eventing shows on county fairs in Tennessee, teaming with Air Paris against Wolfie D and Jamie Dundee. Actually, that'd be pretty fuckin' awesome.

Four on four. This period was also the beginning of Ian losing weight (which he is always hyped as losing a lot of) and getting into being an accomplished technical wrestler. And he's tried hard to do well in those matches, but standing there with a Stroh's belly and wrestling in jean shorts, it looks sort of contrived a lot of times. Although, when it comes to doing stiff style forearms or uppercuts, Ian comes correct. Scorpio is so more "enhanced" and in trunks so much brighter for the trunks, it adds to the allusion that Scorpio is major league compared to these other guys. Whatever happened to Danny Dominion? He seems like if all these other dudes in this match got more notoriety, then Dominion probably should've as well. Cabana and Scorpio work some nice "black guy and white dude who loves black guy shit" maneuvers together, like dancing elbow drops and the such. 15 minutes into a one-hour time limit, and nobody can get a pinfall because of partners breaking it up...it's a recipe for ridiculous goodness that I'm sure will fall apart into like three pins in seven minutes real quick. A slight attention to detail that makes me love a guy like CM Punk: Ian German suplexes him on his head, and immediately goes for the pin, trying to flip him over with one hand, but Punk doesn't roll, so Ian has to crawl in further and use both hands to force a rollover to get the pin attempt; an unconscious body ain't easy to flip over, and even though maybe nobody really consciously noticed that, it does give the impression that Punk got knocked the fuck out to the subconscious collective audience mind. They have a nice lucha-style dive section, but it gets cheapened by Jim Fannin doing a dive. Oh, the ref does a tope con hilo, and Ian does a dive onto everybody ringside, and since this is a serious match, this is obviously the transition between the early part of the match where nobody has a clear advantage, then you toss in the comedy, and then we get down to business. I expect four people to get pinned in the next nine minutes. Chris Hero is not afraid to throw a forearm right upside your face. Looks like Hero was supposed to get the pin on Kid with a Hero's Welcome, but Scorpio was in the ring, so he gave Hero a kick to the face to justify his presence. So Steel comes in and gets an unchallenged pinfall after a simple tombstone.

Four on three, heel advantage. Punk does his running knee into the head into the corner, which usually looks good because Punk goes over the top rope, as if his momentum was uncontrollable, except Ian just stands there straight up the whole time, so visually, it looked far goofier than that move usually looks. I've also noticed far more communicating during the match than most matches I've seen, as Punk just lifts Ian up for a suplex, leaned low the whole time, jawjacking, and Ian twists it all around and hits a lopsided underhook DDT-plex type mixmatch thing for the second fall.

Three on three, straight up like the gangstaism of Big Mike and 3-2. I was busy pulling the cork out of a month-old bottle of wine when I heard the bell ring, and Colt Cabana had pinned Chris

Hero. Last I saw, Hero was contorting Cabana, so I guess there was some upside down visor chicanery going on, in the name of babyface.

Three on two, fan favorite advantage. Holy fuck, Danny Dominion does a belly-to-back suplex on Cabana where Cabana compressed some vertebrates. Cabana Colts up, but misses a moonsault on Double D, and then Ace Steel comes in and hits a superplex for the pin.

Two on two, even steven. Scorpio and Steel start this part off with a little lay down on the mat workout segment. You know Scorpio, at the time, cost too much money or had too much ego to lose to these guys, and it's Ian's promotion, so I expect a facial run from here on out. I might've missed this in previous Scorpio matches I've scoped, but I enjoy his sudden kicks to the skull of people. In this match thus far, he's like a hybrid between Low-Ki and the singer from Living Colour. 45 minutes into this, and Ian is moving and wrestling like he's tired, although, as soon as I say that, he and Steel start trading fat forearms ringside. Dominion kicks out of a Scorpio moonsault, and Steel's back is covered in the filth of the ringside floor. Punk and Hero come back out, but then Suicide Kid and Colt Cabana come back out as well, to even it back out to what it was before all that nonsense started. Old wine is warm in my belly. Tag move smoothness by Dominion and Steel to pin Scorpio, but Ian breaks up the pin, and this is sort of at the breaking point of no longer being good and just being too goddamned long. I think the outside interference of people who had already been eliminated made it seem longer. They do a double pin where Scorp pins Double D, and Steel pins Ian, but the ref only acknowledges the Dominion loss. So...

Two on one, faces not in peril. There's a lot of hot, young sluts in the front row, which is why a guy like Suicide Kid is good to have in your promotion. 2 Cold hits a 450 splash on Steel, to get the win, and it was never really known whether the Ian pin counted or not, but no matter, the faces win. Ian pulls off his shirt, wobbles over to the mic, and talks about how everybody in that match was the greatest ever, and I better remember my Ian Rotten-on-the-microphone rule, or else I'll lose seventeen minutes of my life. But I did stop to hear Ian ask Scorpio to get Vader to come, which is kinda fucked up. "Hey, I booked you in my promotion, and you're awesome and all, but can you hook me up with your boy who I don't know how to get up with?" No wonder I don't remember 2 Cold Scorpio being in IWA again.

THE 2001 EAGLE PRO CRUISERWEIGHT TOURNAMENT- SUPER JUDIST/CRUSHER TAKAHASHI (CROWN) vs. HIROSHI SHIMADA/TAKAO IWASAKI (EAGLE)- PART III- (by DEAN RASMUSSEN): Super Judist hands the box of Budweiser to Crusher. Crusher lines up all four remaining Budweiser in a straight line on the table. Crusher then rips the side out of the 12 pack box and then rips half of the top off- creating a beer helmet- with the two whole by the handle as eyeslits and and handle as a guard over his nose. He places his helmet on his head and glares at Judist. Judist gives him a look his patience being push to the edge but relents and stands erect- a soldier at attention for Crusher's makeshift Beer Ritual.

"TO YOU, SWEET BUDWEISER- I, CRUSHER TAKAHASHI, MAKE MY MOTHERFUCKING PEACE WITH YE." Crusher then drinks each beer, deliberately, continuously but not chugging

or spilling. A melancholy glaze of acceptance falls over his face. "Eh. It's not bad. It's better than that Michelob shit." Judist's face is no longer martial and pseudo-sincere at the mention of the word "Michelob".

"I've tasted pee that was better than Michelob- goat pee, dog pee, your pee, my pee..."

"God, you are such a fucking freak. Whoa." The watery booze onslaught's ordinance reaches Crusher's bloodstream. "Fuck. Now I guess I need to go ahead and get drunk. Let's go to the Superfresh and get some Magnum."

"Well, I was actually gonna ask you if you wanted to go with me to go settle up on this restaurant thing."

"You got any idea how much it's worth? What's it called?"

"Big Dog Burger. It's out in Keysville. You wanna go with me?"

"If I can get drunk while we ride, Sure."

"Shouldn't be a problem. I actually know the guy who is majority owner. He's pretty aware that I'm a complete fuck-up."

"You're not a fuck-up, you just haven't become noticed for.... whatever it is you do again."

"My dreams... have wilted.... like hothouse flowers....."

"Oh right oil drill firefighter. How is that coming along?"

"Yeah, get drunk. Maybe it will shut you the fuck up."

"Hell yeah it will"

They walk to the elevator and go down to the parking garage. Crusher and Super Judist step out of the elevator and directly into view of the 1970 AMC Javelin- it's pearl white and baby blue exterior bathed in the subterranean flood lights. Crusher is speechless at first. Crusher walks closer slowly and brings himself to speak.

"Oh... honey fuckin hush." He gazes into the window and sees the ripped black upholstery. "Holy motherfucking fuck." He touches the pearl white paint on the doors as if caressing a baby's cheek. "Fuck me motherfucking runnin." He looks at the dull chrome and his head tilts in euphoric love. "Fuck..... fuck." A tear wells up in Crusher's eyes and he gets weirdly deadly serious. "See, fuck the bullshit. FUCK the BULLSHIT. If you think I'm motherfucking kidding when I say this I swear to motherfucking GOD that I will beat living motherfucking dogpiss out of you." His eyes are intense and he bows up his back, fully expecting to charge his

best friend and beat him to death if necessary. "THIS car is why I'm proud to be American." He motions grandly and points his finger at Judist. "THIS is better than a Monet. THIS is better than the Ring Cycle. THIS is motherfucking PURE EMBODIMENT of the greatness of man." He looks away from Super Judist and feels his . "Ancient times... ANCIENT TIMES, man would never dream that the cart he was riding would one day evolve into THIS- this the most beautiful thing I have ever seen....."

He starts breaking down and crying and Super Judist awkwardly embraces him and fights back an urge to make a sarcastic remark. He realizes that there are lines that he should not cross with Crusher and violating Crusher's sacred ideal that it is only manly to weep for witnessing things of innate beauty or when witnessing an actor of unbelievable courage is a line Judist has never and will not cross. He allows his friend to have his moment and waits for Crusher to compose himself. Crusher steels his face and wipes away his tears and pretends they did not exist. "Okay!" he says as a battle cry. Super Judist starts up the Javelin and they ride.

The atmosphere in the car is strained. Crusher cuts the tension. "So. Magnum at Superfresh."

"C'mon man, Magnum is so 5 years ago."

"I know, I was feeling nostalgic. I was 24, the ladies were actually in danger of my simple and unsatisfying love actions..."

"Ah yes, I remember those days well. But let's get something real."

"You mean like corn whiskey? White LIGHTNIN'?! SOME CRACK?!?!?"

"Yeah, let's go score some crack. We'll go to your mom's house. I was thinkin' 'How about some Guinness?'" Judist hits the main drag of Norfolk- Hampton Boulevard.

"How about I knee you in the balls?"

"Not the 'It's actually brewed in Montreal bullshit again...'"

"I'm just kidding. I don't carek. Kinda pricy though, wouldn't you say? How about some... Hey look, a New Hampshire license plate. That is so cool."

"Live Free or Die'?"

"Yeah, that's the coolest state slogan."

"Oh I don't know about that, my good friend Crusher. I would say the great state of Virginia has a fine motto: Sic Semper Tyrannus."

"Well, it doesn't actually work on its own."

"Whaddy mean- 'Thus Always to Tyrants'. That's hardcore."

"Well, yeah but it doesn't actually make sense on its own. Now when you put it with the greatest of all possible state flags- the state flag of Virginia- you got the real deal. You need the man with the Roman sword standing over the corpse of the tyrant and saying "THUS... ALWAYS! TO TYRANTS.....' That's fucking hardcore."

"Yeah, what were they thinking when they came up with that. 'Yeah, Patrick, we got the dogwood tree idea with the cardinal in the tree- covering the state bird and state tree at once with the.... BOOOORING! Think outside the box. Think action sequence. THINK- FRAZETTA PAINTING!"

"Well, it would need cooler helmets and more naked chicks."

"Well, it was the 1700s. It was a PROTO-Frazetta."

"Fair enough. Maybe a snake. And naked chick chained to the tyrant killer guy's ankle."

TO BE CONTINUED.

Samoa Joe vs Necro Butcher, IWA Mid-South 6/11/05- [AG]:Necro in a CHOOSE DEATH t-shirt, which augurs well. Starts off with back and forth potato forearms, then we find Necro in the crowd, where SJ beats the hell out of him some more. Necro takes control, starts throwing chairs and the like outside onto Joe. Joe recovers, hits a sick abbreviated powerslam where Necro lands on his forehead. Much more stiffness, then Necro with his Terry Funk selling. Some obvious spotcalling here and there detracts, as does the occasional Joey Styleness on the matchcalling, and the dueling chants from the fans. Joe eats less of Necro's offense than the other way around. References to sordid things -- weed, Rob Naylor, the internet -- hither and yon. By midmatch, Necro's face looks like a post-partum womb, like an open wound with hair adorning it. Joe German suplexes Necro on a folding chair, does not protect the neck. Necro does so much here to make Joe look like Chief Shinya McDaniel. Necro takes the knockout, eats a bunch of 3/4 Legit, and makes Joe look like a bigger star than he has a right to. The commentary has been raved about elsewhere, but really did little for me. All in all, though, a solid, bloody match. Necro may be the best seller working right now, and his looks -- Killer Brooks, Jr. -- are OK too.

Alexander Otsuka vs Minoru Suzuki- New Japan-5/15/2005- (DEAN RASMUSSEN): Alexander Otsuka SHOULD be NOAH champion by now but he his excursion into the realm of being PRIDE's Ass That Someone Will Stomp- which prolly pays better than anything fixed he could have gotten tangled up with after his triumphant BattlARTs run and horrendously bad Zero-One run and I was wondered what he was up to lately- and here he is on our mysterious on-line benefactors download page wrestling shootstyle legend and recent Southern old school heel Minoru Suzuki. It's a five and a half minute match and it is pretty inspired booking for a WCW

Worldwide match- as Suzuki has traveled the same terrain as Otsuka but with greater success because the FIRST wave of shootstyle was fixed (RINGS, his bigger PANCRASE matches are suspected of being part of "gentleman's agreements".) so he wasn't immediately exposed when faced with 24/7 MMA fighters. But this should spark something in Otsuka- as Suzuki has given him an example, "When the shoot career goes south, the smart go pro style." Otsuka can bring the pro style like a motherfucker as his seminal BattlARTS matches can attest. Here, he is schooled by New Japan dojo trainee Suzuki on how to work a Memphis match but there is so much more: Otsuka starts rubbing Minoru Suzuki's hair during a break and stands back and gives the look of "What the fuck is up with your hair, brah?" Suzuki gives a stunningly deep facial expression of shame, resignation and defiance that William Regal would give a years pay to have in his arsenal of facial expressions. The shaming is over, the beatings begin. Suzuki crushes Otsuka's face with knees and does the nasty corner dropkick to the face and takes him to the center of the ring and kicks him in the front and the back. Otsuka goes completely Pro Style and runs Suzuki into the ropes and hits the Frankensteiner to set up two Takayama Himalaya Deadlift German Suplexes. They go into Otsuka selling a YAmazakied sleeper before Suzuki makes this completely demonic expression, releases the hold and win with a FUCKING PILEDRIIVER. Welcome to Memphis, Japan, motherfucker. The world needs Alexander Otsuka- the heavyweight professional wrestler. I think it can live with one less MMA tomato can. And Suzuki is your Southern Heel Japanese Messiah.

Necro Butcher vs. Kintaro Kanemura- 10/22/04- Big Japan-(RAVEN MACK): Kanemura is a happy legend of hardcore, and he comes out to the adulation a man of such sub-culture stature would receive. Necro is shirtless, in jeans, grabbing chairs out from flat Asian asses, with Creedence as his entrance music, looking EXACTLY like what he is - a longhaired bearded West Virginia country boy gone international for reasons that just wouldn't make sense to the mainstream. He actually is allowed some offense in Japan, instead of being relegated to the character of a Cactus Jack Mulkey like he can be in the more tape-circulated indys of America. Just having a crowd, complete with people sitting in balconies, seems to feed him, and Necro is more animated than usual. He gets laid out ringside and Kanemura starts setting up tables on the other side of the Hall, then drags Necro over for an audience-friendly dive. Both are bloody, of course, by this point. They are all over the place, of course, throughout. Necro is both the post-modern King of the Headbutts and the King of Taking Suplex/Powerbomb Bumps on Unforgiving Surfaces. Kanemura seems reluctant to receive at times, but I think he's earned that in his lifetime. Kanemura wins with suddenness rather than climax. I hope that ten years from now, Necro is able to do the same as Kanemura does now in small towns he books cards in West Virginia. I am not one to suggest somebody tone it down, because fuck toning it down. A half-throttle lifestyle is one that gets nowhere fast, and just because the trip takes a longer time doesn't automatically mean it's a better trip. And if Necro didn't do what he does, most people wouldn't know shit about him. In fact, it's funny to me how people will either talk about how stupid he is, or love on him and hope he slows it down to go for a long ride in the wrestling. Why? He has made a legend of himself at a young age, and me, not being a legend at all nor having the insane yet intelligent enough capabilities to become one, can only hope he grows this legend rather than depletes it. Few of us are able to achieve that in our lifetime, and the rock-n-roll mentality legend, which is achieved through charismatic self-destruction, is a hard

row to hoe all the way down to the end of the line. Wendy O. Williams was a hot leather-clad punk/metal slut who finalized her life as a tired vegetarian who committed suicide. Probably one of the three or four album covers I've ever masturbated to in my life was Wendy O.'s Legends Never Die LP, and that song rings true in this situation. Kanemura is proof positive. Necro, hopefully, will be as well. You should never betray the 17-year-old within yourself completely, ever, or you become dead on the legend scale, regardless of how much oxygen you keep sucking on to waste your half-throttled time with.

Beau James vs Chris Richards- 7/2/2005- Championship Wrestling- Kingsport, TN- (DEAN RASMUSSEN): A different mysterious benefactor (who happens to run CW wrestling) made this available to those of us who couldn't drive 10 hours to see it live. Chris Richards had been pretty great as the embattled Southern babyface and Beau James had been SOLID GOLD on the STICK~! in the build up to this; enough to work we- the internet viewing community- to an indie feverpitch to see this match (which is really fucking good TV if you can generate that much interest with TWO 28 minute episodes). Richards truly beats the crap out of James early and his punches are nice and he doesn't fear using the chain effectively. James blades because it is the SOUTH and it's a fucking dog-collar match. (The ref is dressed very disturbingly, being an old man with a Mike Reno headband to counter his Harry Carey old man glasses- with spandex pants on with "You Wish" air-brushed across again ass. I quake in fear. On second thought, maybe it's alluring in a DILF kind of way. Maybe I should get in touch. With myself.) James is a bit more plodding on offense- as he, like all of us old fuckers, could stand to lose fifty pounds. He has nice enough punches and Richards blades after the first flurry of chain-enhanced punches to the face (South. Dog-collar.). Richards makes truly great faces while doing the hanged spots and he has actual dangerous energy when he is on offense- something that is lacking when James is on offense. The part where James can't make it over the top rope is little pathetic but it leads up to the awesome finish- as Richards is hanging James over the top rope, KC Thunder crawls under the ring, uncollars James, and KC holds the chain while Beau James crawls under the ring and destroys Richards from behind. Then the whole First Family storms the ring and the killing of babyfaces as they hang Richards is more Southern than fatback in your collards. The postmatch is better than the dog-collar match and that is why this really rules. As for how it compares to other current indie Southern matches, NWA-VA's Old School Empire can conjure 100x's the complete ass-stomp as this without ever leaving the ring, much less need a chain. Postmatch mayhem (which is just as important an aspect to Southern style wrestling) is slightly in the First Family's favor- though nobody on earth is better on the Stick postmatch than Preston Quinn. Let's get these kids together....

Steve Corino vs. Homicide- barbed wire match- ROH- 11/29/03-(RAVEN MACK):

I like Steve Corino. And I like Homicide. And I like barbed wire. And contrary to what some may think, I like Ring of Honor. And the somber backstage attitude of both participants before this match added to the intensity. Wrestling needs intensity. Corino's entrance being first is a smart move, because he understands to stop and stare at the mayhem set up in front of him, and he reaches out and rubs a thumb over one of the barbs, which live probably didn't reach everyone, but on tape, is a perfect visual. And if ever there was a manager perfect for this, or any match, it would be Julius Smokes. He is Gary Hart had Hart grew up listening to Ghostface Killah.

They slowly tease barbed wire run-ins, and considering the hatred of this feud at that point, it portrays the devastation of the much as a sobering element. Finally, Corino drops Homicide into the barbed wire. And then gouges a gig into Homicide's head, following it up with some bites. But then Corino gets DDTed onto a bat, allowing himself time to give himself the Corino gusher, and when followed up with a fork to the forehead, it simulates madness. Corino finally sits up straight after blading himself, and after Homicide sticks a fork in him even though they're not done, showing off the blood to the crowd, validating the hatred. Some things that lessen the experience though...

#1: Hardcore bloodfests in the likes of IWA and CZW make the build-up of this match seem tame. It's like trying to enjoy a good old school porn tape with a preamble to the sex after being desensitized by years of watching gangbang tapes.

#2: Crowds chanting all the goddamned time. The monkeyflip of Homicide into the barbed wire, though with his outfit was not insane, it still packed a visual punch. Hearing "Holy Shit! Holy Shit!" for the seven thousandth time in my life associated it with things like referees doing moonsaults and former strippers getting DDTed onto stop signs so that they show their thongs. The "Holy Shit!" chant being audible from the audience works just as lamely as if one of these shitty commentators had said, immediately after Homicide was flipped into the barbed wire, "That is JUST LIKE when I saw Joel Gertner get hurricanrana'd by Beulah McGillicutty."

I love Homicide losing control of his senses and hitting the knee to the face in the corner, not thinking about his own body getting stuck in wire. It stayed hot for a few quick minutes, but then the match slowed down and got goofy with gimmicks, and as you all know, because you're on the internet, Smokes threw in the towel. Why the fuck do you need a chain link barricade in a barbed wire match? And why, if Steve Corino put on gloves to hold a small length of barbed wire, WHEN HE'S BEEN FUCKIN' WRESTLING IN A BARBED WIRE ROPES MATCH FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES IN NOTHING BUT SKIVVIES AND BOOTS? What the fuck?

The start of the match had all the awesome unspoken hatred of Magnum T.A./Tully Blanchard; the end of the match had all the convolutedness of going to the DMV to get a title transfer while not realizing your license was suspended because of proofs of insurance you didn't even know about. It leaves you frustrated that what you came for is not quite what you got.

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